year 1998-99 from U.P. Export Corporation Ltd., Kanpur amounting to Rs. 261.50 lakhs. The proposal was not considered by the Government as the project was not in conformity with the parameters of any of the approved schemes of the Government for promotion and development of handicrafts.

(b) Does not arise.

Lifting barriers between PoK and J&K

*432. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India have decided to lift barriers at specific locations along the Line of Control so that Kashmiris living in PoK could travel to J&K for family reunions; and

(b) if so, the number of joints to be opened on the 540 km. long LoC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) As confidence building measures with Pakistan, Government have proposed to open new check posts at designated points along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.

(b) The check posts are proposed to be opened at two places along the LoC.

Modernisation of CPMF

*433. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:
SHRI ABANI ROY:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the modernisation of Central Para-Military Forces has received a severe jolt because the funds earmarked for the modernisation could not be made available in the last few years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to ensure that the funds for the modernisation of CPMFs are made available and properly utilised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO): (a) to (c) No, Sir. During the last few years, the Government has given special attention to upgrading the strike capability of CPMFs by induction of modern and sophisticated weaponry and equipment. In order to provide a time perspective to Government effort and to cope with the challenge of increased militant and terrorist activities, a Five Year perspective modernisation plan has been formulated which will be implemented in a phased manner.

Cultivation of barren land

†*434. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there are vast areas of barren land throughout the country which can be brought under cultivation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to take any time-bound steps to bring the barren land under cultivation; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) to (d) The process of soil erosion and land degradation leading to degraded lands, including barren lands, occurs owing to faulty cultivation practices, under utilization of land resources, deterioration due to lack of appropriate soil and water management and natural and environmental causes.

As per the Wastelands Atlas of India, 2000 (brought out by the Department of Land Resources in collaboration with the National Remote Sensing Agency, Hyderabad employing Satellite Remote Sensing Technologies), the total extent of Wastelands/Degraded lands in the country is 63.85 million hectare, out of which the extent of barren rocky/stony waste/sheet rock area is 6.45 million hectare. The State-wise details are placed at Statement-I (*See* below).

While no specific programme is currently under implementation to bring barren land under cultivation, the main Programmes and Schemes of the Central Government for the treatment of wastelands and degraded lands have components to develop/reclaim such lands by checking and degradation and putting such lands to productive use, the details, of which are given at Statement-II.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.